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A

SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DECEASE OF

JOHN HOWARD, Esq.

PREACHED IN

LITTLE WILD-STREET,

NEAR

LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS,

MARCH 21, 1790.

By SAMUEL STENNETT, D.D.

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M.DCC.XC.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

ASSEMBLING IN LITTLE WILD-STREET,

NEAR LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS,

THE FOLLOWING SERMON,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS,

WITH GREAT RESPECT,

INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE

AND OBLIGED

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

MUSWELL-HILL,
April 5, 1790.

A

SERMON, &c.

ACTS x. 38.

—WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD—

IT is a ſad providence that directs my attention to theſe words—words ſo deſcriptive of the character to which I mean to accommodate them, that the name of HOWARD ſcarce need be mentioned to inform you whom I intend. To raiſe a monument to his memory is not my object. It does not require it, nor am I equal to the ſervice. The obligations however I owe to *his* friendſhip and *your* edification, will not allow me to be ſilent. His benevolent regards to this Chriſtian Society; his regular attendance with us for

many years paſt, as opportunity permitted; the ſatisfaction he expreſſed in the word here preached; and the particular ſhare I had in his affectionate eſteem, are all conſiderations which will I hope ſecure me from the imputation of vanity, in thus taking notice of ſo public a character.

The words of our text were ſpoken by the Apoſtle *Peter* to *Cornelius*, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. "God anointed him with "the Holy Ghoſt, and with power, ſo that "he went about doing good, and healing all "that were oppreſſed of the Devil: for God "was with him." The two particulars I mean to illuſtrate and improve, are,

I. His Buſineſs, which was "doing good;" and

II. The Diligence with which he purſued it—"He went about" doing good.

I. His Buſineſs. It was "doing good."

He was a "Benefactor" to mankind. A title aſſumed by one of the Egyptian Kings, how juſtly I will not enquire. But whatever good offices

offices a *Ptolemy Euergetes* might perform, his character is not to be mentioned at the ſame time with that of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He is indeed JESUS THE BENEFACTOR. Not to ſpeak here of the grand object of his appearance in our world, the offering his life a ſacrifice of ſin: how benevolently was he employed during his pilgrimage on earth! "He went about doing good"—good, both to the *Souls* and the *Bodies* of men. To the latter indeed our text principally refers. And though it inſtances only one ſpecies of good he did, that of "healing them who were oppreſſed of the Devil;" yet the phraſe itſelf comprehends all poſſible ways of being beneficial to mankind. And the inſtance here mentioned plainly intimates, as ſome have obſerved, that he who took ſuch pains to reſcue the bodies of men from the power and poſſeſſion of the devil, would not ſuffer their ſouls to remain under his dominion. He "did good" then both to their *Souls* and their *Bodies*.

FIRST, To their *Souls*.

This he did by his public preaching, and his private inſtructions. He ſet himſelf to oppoſe the paſſions of depraved nature, and

the prejudices ariſing from the ignorance and ſuperſtition of the times. He laid the axe to the root of the tree, and reſolutely combated the abſurd and dangerous principles of the Scribes and Phariſees, who ſat in Moſes's ſeat, and lorded it over the conſciences of men. He ſhewed the fallacy of their reaſonings, and the evil tendency of their doctrines. And knowing the ſecrets of their hearts, he warned men to beware of their hypocriſy, affirming that they were "blind leaders of the blind *." And while he thus attacked the prevailing errors of the times, which had confirmed men in ignorance and ſin, he failed not to give them juſt apprehenſions of GOD, his *Law*, the *Soul*, the *Way of life and ſalvation*, *Religion*, and a *Future ſtate*.

The character of the bleſſed GOD he placed in its true light, by aſcribing to him the perfections of wiſdom, juſtice, holineſs, goodneſs, and truth; and by drawing out the lively expreſſions thereof in his own pure and perfect example.

The divine *Law* he reſcued from thoſe falſe gloſſes and abſurd interpretations, which had been impoſed upon it by wicked and deſigning

* Matt. xv. 14.

men;

men; giving its true and genuine ſenſe, and explaining its ſpirituality, extent, and authority.

The *Soul* he affirmed to be immortal: and whilſt he aſſerted its dignity, importance, and amenableneſs at the divine tribunal, gave a ſtriking picture of the ſad ſtate to which it is reduced by ſin; laying open the ignorance, pride, paſſion, and iniquity of the human heart, and inſiſting on the neceſſity of a moral change, or of the "New-birth *."

All haughty pretences to merit he treated with ſovereign contempt, teaching men that HE alone was "the Mediator between God and them †," that "none could come to God with acceptance but by him ‡," and that "they only who believed on him, the Saviour of the World, ſhould have life through him §."

The nature of *Perſonal Religion* he explained, and the obligations of Chriſtians to it he enforced by the nobleſt motives. The bleſſings of a peaceful conſcience, and the pleaſures reſulting from a hope of the divine favour, he ſet in the moſt engaging light. And while he recommended the virtues of humility, faith, and benevolence, with their genuine fruits, he

* John iii. 3. † 1 Tim. ii. 5. ‡ John xiv. 6. § John iii. 36.

pointed to the Bleſſed Spirit as the Author of theſe heavenly gifts, and directed his followers to look for them as the effect of his influence.

To crown all, he gave the moſt pleaſing and animated deſcriptions of the felicity and glory of heaven, and the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of its certainty and everlaſting duration.—Such was the doctrine our Saviour taught, ever accompanied with the cleareſt reaſoning, the moſt forcible arguments, and the warmeſt perſuaſions.

It is alſo obſervable of his inſtructions, that they were ſo conducted as to the ſeaſon, manner, and other circumſtances of them, as beſt to attain the end he had always in view of "doing good." He taught both publicly and privately, at home and abroad, in the temple and the ſynagogues, in the city and the deſart. He took occaſion from the common occurrences of life to engage the attention of men to the great truths of religion, and to fix a deep impreſſion of their importance upon their hearts. He addreſſed himſelf to the different characters, paſſions, and conditions of his hearers. The ignorant he taught with gentleneſs and forbearance, pity-

ing

ing their prejudices, and condeſcending to their weakneſſes. The diſtreſſed he comforted, like a compaſſionate phyſician, healing the broken hearted, and pouring oil and wine into the wounds of the bleeding conſcience. The proud and ſelf-confident oppoſer he reproved with ſeaſonable freedom, and juſt ſeverity. Nor would the peculiar affection he bare to his own diſciples, ſuffer him to ſoothe their irregular paſſions, or palliate their criminal miſtakes. As occaſion was, he reprehended or he pitied them, he exhorted or he comforted them, he cenſured or he applauded them. And his inſtructions he cloathed with ſuch language, figures, and parables; and uttered them with ſuch a voice and geſture, as were beſt adapted to convey them with clearneſs and energy to the mind and conſcience.—Thus did our divine Saviour, in every poſſible way, ſerve the intereſts of the immortal ſouls of men. Which leads me to ſpeak,

SECONDLY, Of his "doing good" to their *Bodies*.

Their temporal intereſts, every ſpecies of which I include in this phraſe, were an object

he did not deem unworthy of his attention. As he was not himſelf a ſtranger to poverty and affliction, ſo neither was he inſenſible of the miſeries of others. So far from it, that he is ſaid to have "borne their griefs and carried their ſorrows *:" and "he came not to be miniſtered to, but to miniſter †."

How much he was concerned for the civil intereſts of his native country, appears from the tears he ſhed over Jeruſalem, while he looked forward to the dreadful calamities that were coming upon it. The offices too of private friendſhip he performed with the greateſt chearfulneſs, as is evident from the provident care he took of his diſciples, whom he conſidered as his family, and the affectionate farewel he gave them at laſt. And of the good he did to individuals of every rank and condition where he came, the inſtances are innumerable.

He was himſelf poor, and ſo had little of this world's good to diſtribute to the needy. Yet what he had he freely communicated to

* Iſa. liii. 4. † Matt. xx. 28.

them;

them; and the widow, the orphan, and the ſtranger all ſhared of his bounty. Having no other way to provide for a large multitude that followed him into the wilderneſs, and were almoſt ſpent with hunger, he miraculouſly multiplied a few ſmall loaves and fiſhes, and ſo kindly ſupplied the cravings of animal nature *. The ſick he healed. The cries of tender parents for their children, of maſters for their ſervants, of the humane for their afflicted friends and neighbours, he heard and anſwered. He gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and feet to the lame. The hungry he fed, and the naked he cloathed. Little children received his benediction, and "the bleſſing of thouſands that were ready to periſh came upon him †." By his preſence, houſes hung round with ſorrow and mourning, were made chearful and happy. The widow of Nain, through his tender compaſſion, had her only ſon reſtored to life, and given back to her embraces ‡; and *Martha* and *Mary* their beloved brother *Lazarus* §.

* John vi. 5—14. † Job xxix. 13. ‡ Luke vii. 11—17. § John xi. 1—46.

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In ſhort, every place he viſited had ſome monument of gratitude to raiſe to his liberality. And his diſciples long after, well remembered what he was uſed to ſay, with heart-felt pleaſure and delight, "It is better to give than receive *." The favorite maxim this by which he governed his life, and which he found means to practiſe amidſt all the poverty and miſery he endured.—Thus have we taken a general view of "the good he did both to the *Bodies* and *Souls* of men."—And now let us ſee,

II. With what attention and diligence he performed this the great buſineſs of his life. —"He went about" doing good.

Such was his conſtant, unwearied, and moſt delightful employment. He conſidered it as his proper work, juſt as men do the following their ſeveral trades and occupations of life. —So he calls it "his Father's buſineſs." "Wot ye not that I was about my Father's buſineſs †?" —And "the work which was given him to do ‡." To do the will of God was "his meat and drink §;" as natural to him,

* Acts xx. 31. † Luke ii. 49. ‡ John xvii. 4. § John iv. 34.

as

as it is to men in common to gratify their ſenſes. And that it was thus his object will appear, if you conſider theſe three things, manifeſtly included in the expreſſion of "going about" to do good,—the *Wide Extent* of his labors — the *Pains* which of neceſſity muſt attend his work — and his *Perſeverance* therein.

FIRST, As to the *Wide Extent* of his labors.

He did not move in a narrow ſphere. His aim of doing good was not confined to his own proper family, to his neighbourhood, to the town where he lived, or to the villages round about it, no nor to Judæa itſelf. It was not confined to his immediate diſciples, or to his own party, as they were perhaps called; no nor to the Jews themſelves. He did good to all ſorts of men, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, perſons of every deſcription. "He went about" doing good. He did not ſtay at home, and receive all that came to him, as Paul was obliged to do at Rome, in his own hired houſe. But he went abroad, went whereſoever he was ſent for, or where there

there was any proſpect of doing good. Sometimes he is ſeen in the city, and ſometimes in the wilderneſs; ſometimes in the towns and villages, and ſometimes in the fields and by the way-ſide: now in Galilee, then in Judæa.

SECONDLY. The *Pains and Fatigues* too attending his work were very great.

His conſtitution was probably as tender, and as ſuſceptible of languor and wearineſs as that of the moſt delicate. This however was no temptation to him to ſloth and indulgence. Urged by a vehement deſire of doing good, he is forgetful of himſelf, and indifferent to thoſe precautions which would be generally thought prudent. Hunger, thirſt, and cold, he willingly ſuffers to accompliſh his deſigns. Hazardous and fatiguing journeys he takes to compaſs the ends of his miniſtry. Sometimes we ſee him ſitting on the ſide of a well, and aſking a little water to quench his thirſt*. And again, entering a village where the inhoſpitable inhabitants refuſe him any entertainment. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air neſts: but the Son of man

* John iv. 6, 7.

hath

hath not where to lay his head *," yet none of theſe things diſcourage him.

Nor does his love of ſolitude, which muſt have been peculiarly grateful to him who had in himſelf ſuch ſources of divine entertainment, divert him from his grand object. If he may but do good he is content to live in a croud. Nor is he diſcouraged by the oppoſition he meets with. Nothing is ſo great a trial to a good man, as to be traduced for a deſigning hypocrite, and repreſented as aiming at popularity, or ſomething worſe. So our Lord was treated. Yet this cruel treatment does not provoke him to deſiſt from his attempts to do good; no nor the baſe ingratitude of many who received favours at his indulgent hands.—Once more,

THIRDLY. The phraſe intimates his *Conſtancy and Perſeverance* in this his delightful employment.

He did not in one or two inſtances only do good. He did not upon a few occaſions only exert himſelf for the good of his family, his

* Matt. viii. 20.

neigh-

neighbourhood, his friends, or his country. It was not in his early days only that he was thus employed, or when incited to duty by ſome fair opportunity that offered. To do good was the buſineſs of his whole life. At twelve years of age he was doing good in the temple *, and the very laſt day of his life he was employed in the ſame work. His zeal never abated, nor did his buſineſs ſuffer any the leaſt intermiſſion. "I have finiſhed the work," ſays he when he came to die, "which thou gaveſt me to do †."

Thus have you the out-lines of our Saviour's moſt perfect and amiable character—a character which never was or can be equalled. "He went about doing good," and acquitted himſelf with entire ſatisfaction to his divine Father, and the requiſitions of his holy law.

Let us now conſider the Inſtruction which this pleaſing ſubject affords.

FIRST. This view of our Saviour's character ſhould excite in our breaſts the warmeſt

* Luke ii. 96. † John xvii. 4.

love

love to him, and the firmeſt *confidence* in him.

Can we have ſo fair a pattern before our eyes without being enamoured with it? eſpecially when we reflect that to this zeal and diligence of his we owe our hope of everlaſting life. It was not only in obedience to his Father's commands, but to gratify his own ardent deſires for our welfare, as well as that of his immediate diſciples, that he thus went about doing good. From his toils and labours we derive bleſſings of infinite value. He has by theſe means laid open to our view the immeaſurable grace and compaſſion of his heart; given us the moſt ſtriking idea of the divine character; provided effectually for our forgiveneſs, acceptance, and ſalvation; and ſet us an example the moſt engaging—the moſt animating. Behold the Son of God thus "going about doing good," thus providing for the happineſs of myriads of rational creatures, and ſecuring to them joys the moſt refined and that know no end. And then ſay, Whether he is not worthy of our higheſt love and moſt chearful obedience.—Nor can there remain

the

the leaſt ground to ſuſpect either his "*ability*, or his *willingneſs*, to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him *;" after his having given ſuch proofs of the perfection of his character, and the benevolence of his heart.

SECONDLY. In this mirrour of our Saviour's example we have a clear and humbling view of our own defects. His pattern juſtly upbraids the ſin and folly of all. "He went about doing good."

But ah! how many are there, on the contrary, who go about doing evil? like their father the devil, "who, as a roaring lion, walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour †."—Doing evil to God, trampling under foot his righteous law, and caſting contempt upon the gracious propoſals of his goſpel. Doing evil to their fellow-creatures, to their reputation, ſubſtance, and perſons. And doing evil to themſelves, laying violent hands on their immortal ſouls, "making a mock at ſin ‡," and "caſting about

* Heb. vii. 25. † 1 Pet. v. 8. ‡ Prov. xiv. 9.

fire-brands, arrows, and death, ſaying they are in ſport *."—And not only do evil, but "go about" to do evil; conſider it their buſineſs, "make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof †;" and "not only do theſe things," but, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, "have pleaſure in thoſe that do them ‡." How deplorable theſe characters!

Others there are who think it enough if they abſtain from groſs ſins, and doing no one any harm, take it for granted they may be excuſed doing any good. But ſuch men, while ſheltering themſelves under the fond notion of innocence, act in direct oppoſition to their own reaſon; ſince the ſame law that requires them to abſtain from vice, requires them alſo to do good. To men of this character I would ſay,—Behold, I beſeech you, in the mirrour of the Saviour's life, your own lamentable defects; and ſo be convinced of the neceſſity, on the one hand, of that proviſion he has made for the pardon and acceptance of the penitent ſinner; and on the other, of new views, diſpoſitions, and

* Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. † Rom. xiii. 14. ‡ Rom. i. 32.

affections to conſtitute you his diſciples, and engage you to the imitation of his example.

Others indeed are ſenſible, in a degree at leaſt, of their obligations not only to preſerve ſober characters, but alſo to do good: yet, alas! while faintly attempting it, they confidently build their hopes on their ſuppoſed merit. They go about, or rather ſeem to go about, doing good, and therefore think they have a claim to the rewards of heaven, on the ground of ſtrict equity. But let ſuch men compare their works with thoſe of Chriſt, and they will ſee ſuch deficiencies in them, as muſt, unleſs extravagant ſtupidity prevent, ſtrike them dumb in the preſence of a Being who is omniſcient and all-perfect.—Again,

Another deception, no leſs fatal, is that of thoſe who, wholly taken up with ſpeculations in religion, and furiouſly zealous in their contention for the faith; are perfectly indifferent to the great buſineſs of imitating the example of Chriſt. But what evidence does that man give of the genuineneſs of his faith, who acts as if he thought his zeal was to excuſe him from offices of love and obedience; and as if, becauſe

he ſerved the king in his wars, as ſome one expreſſes it, he is to be exempted from taxes? A due conſideration of the life of Chriſt, every where propoſed for our imitation, would make ſuch perſons aſhamed of their pretenſions to religion.—Once more,

While we thus behold our divine Maſter ever employed in doing good, the very beſt of us ſtand reproved for our many failures in duty. Alas! how little good have we done! how little for the glory of God! the honour of Chriſt! and the real welfare of our fellow-creatures! Let us therefore be deeply humbled at the feet of divine Mercy, look by faith to the croſs of Chriſt, and ſhed penitential tears there for our ingratitude and diſingenuity. And let us,

THIRDLY. Be perſuaded to the imitation of his moſt excellent example.

To do good is the nobleſt employment we can be engaged in: nor is there a Chriſtian living who has it not in his power to do good. If then we have abilities, though but in the ſmalleſt degree, for inſtructing others, let us chearfully uſe them to that end. "Let him that hath

the gift of teaching, wait on teaching; or of exhorting, on exhortation*." Be our ſtations in life what they may, whether public or private, let us cheriſh in our boſoms the amiable graces of humility, meekneſs, contentment, and benevolence; and by the genuine expreſſions of thoſe graces in our lives, allure others to the imitation of our example, and ſo do them good. Particularly by acts of charity, if bleſſed with wealth, let us diffuſe happineſs among the poor, and animate thoſe of the ſame rank with ourſelves to the like kind offices. Let us feed the hungry, cloath the naked, viſit the ſick, and take under our patronage the oppreſſed and the friendleſs, the widow and the orphan. And to our endeavours for the good of others, let us add our fervent prayers to God for his bleſſing. Thus let us become the friends and benefactors of mankind.

To animate us to our duty, let it be remembered, that while we are doing good, we are imitating the example of the bleſſed God. "He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works†." O how various,

* Rom. xii. 7, 8. † Pſal. cxlv. 9.

how

how numerous, how prodigious are the expreſſions of his bounty! And how great muſt the honour be to reſemble him, the beſt of all Beings! "Be ye therefore followers of God, brethren, as dear children *."

By doing good we imitate the example of Chriſt. And when to the dignity of his character, we add the obligations we owe to his friendſhip in dying for us, how powerful, how irreſiſtible is the motive to do as he did! O think, Chriſtian, on the one hand, of the immenſe value of your ſoul, the miſeries to which your guilt had expoſed you, and the glory to which you ſtand entitled in heaven; and think, on the other, of the painful ſervices your divine Saviour performed, and the bitter ſufferings he endured, to redeem you from death and hell, and to make you the heir of immortal bliſs: think of all this, and then ſay, Whether you are not bound by every poſſible obligation to imitate the example of ſuch a Friend?

There is alſo the higheſt pleaſure, to a renewed mind, in this God-like employ-

* Epheſ. v. 1.

ment of doing good. Is he a happy man whoſe only object is, to guard againſt temporal evils and to gratify his animal appetites? O! no. Rightly inſtructed in our relation to God and one another, the nobleſt ſenſations we can poſſibly feel, are thoſe which ariſe from a perſuaſion of his favour, and the recollection of having contributed to the happineſs of our fellow-creatures. How earneſtly did the apoſtle exhort the Epheſians to remember the words of Chriſt! "how he ſaid, it is more bleſſed to give than to receive *."

Let me add the animating conſideration of the infinitely glorious rewards of a future ſtate. Yes, Chriſtian, the bleſſed Jeſus, who himſelf went about doing good, will not fail, on the great day of account, to acknowledge your ſervices performed in obedience to his commands, and from a grateful ſenſe of your obligations to his grace. With what unutterable joy will you hear him ſay, in the preſence of angels and men! "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in;

* Acts xx. 35.

naked,

naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me *." "Well done, good and faithful ſervant! enter thou into the joy of the Lord †."

But there is one further conſideration to animate us to our duty, and that is, the example of men eminent for their benevolence and piety. Such an example I have now to hold up to your view. A pattern which is not, indeed, to be copied, in many particulars of it, as few have ability and opportunity for the exertions of ſo diſtinguiſhed a character. The conſideration of it may, however, have a happy effect to engage us, in our little circles, to put out all our ſtrength in the ſervice of God and our fellow-creatures.

Permit me then to give you ſome general account of this extraordinary man, and then relate a few hiſtorical facts concerning him, which will eſtabliſh what has been ſaid of his character, and make impreſſions on our minds ſuited to the preſent occaſion.

* Matth. xxv. 35—39. † Matth. xxv. 21.

I ſhall not take up your time with the particulars of his birth, education, and fortune. The advantages of this kind with which Providence indulged him, and of which he was truly ſenſible, were, of trifling conſideration, when brought into view with thoſe perſonal endowments, natural and religious, by which he was diſtinguiſhed from moſt other characters.

He poſſeſſed a clear underſtanding and a ſound judgment, which were enriched and improved by a variety of uſeful knowledge. And as he had a taſte for polite literature, ſo he was well verſed in moſt of the modern languages, which he took no ſmall pains to acquire, that he might be the better enabled to carry his benevolent purpoſes into effect. He had a juſt idea of the civil and religious rights of mankind, accompanied with a true ſenſe of the worth, importance, and dignity of man as a reaſonable, ſocial, and immortal creature. And as no man had a more extenſive knowledge of the world than he, having converſed with perſonages of the firſt rank in life, and with thoſe in the meaneſt ſtations; with characters eminent for virtue and piety, and the

the moſt abandoned and wretched; ſo no man was more fully perſuaded than he of the univerſal depravity of human nature. With the diſcernment both of a Philoſopher and a Chriſtian he entered into the principles, maxims, and views of men of all ranks and conditions of life; and knew how to apply the knowledge he thus acquired to the moſt important purpoſes.

His moral endowments were perhaps more extraordinary than thoſe juſt mentioned. Here he ſhone with diſtinguiſhed luſtre. The two virtues of *Fortitude* and *Humanity* were the prominent features in his countenance. Nor could his modeſty conceal them from the public eye, no not from the view of all Europe. They were interwoven with his nature, and always acted in uniſon with each other.

Such was the *Firmneſs of his Mind* that no danger could deter him from his duty—not the painful fatigues of long and hazardous journies—not the perils of ſeas infeſted with mercileſs barbarians—not the loathſome infection of dungeons—not the dread of aſſaſſination by the hands of miſcreants, who draw

their

their gains from the vitals of thoſe committed to their cuſtody—nor the apprehenſion of the plague in a ſhip with a foul bill, and in the confinement of a Lazaretto—no danger however formidable could ſhake his reſolution. "Having made up his mind to his duty," as he told me when expreſſing my apprehenſions for his ſafety, "he thruſted all conſequences "from his view, and was reſolved to follow "wherever Providence led." And in a letter I received from him, when juſt embarking on a dangerous ocean, with the proſpect before him of performing a forty-two days quarantaine, he thus expreſſes himſelf, "*I bleſs God,* "*my calm ſpirits and ſteady reſolution have not* "*yet forſaken me.*"

He was ſuperior too to the frowns and the contempt of the envious and the avaricious, who repreſented him as petulantly officious, or extravagantly inſane. Diſappointments he *did* meet with, and obſtructions *were* thrown in the way of ſome of his benevolent plans. But none of theſe things moved him. And more than one inſtance I might mention of his aſſerting the cauſe of the oppreſſed, in the face of a kind of oppoſition which would make moſt men tremble.—Nor on the other hand, could the

the Siren-ſong of eaſe, indulgence, and pleaſure, prevail on him when on the career of duty and danger, in the leaſt to relax his painful exertions.

" Firm to the maſt with chains himſelf he bound,
" Nor truſted virtue to th' enchanting ſound."

With this Roman fortitude was united uncommon *Humanity*. He felt for the miſeries of mankind in general. He felt for the miſeries of the oppreſſed. Yea, he felt for the miſeries of the guilty, for he well remembered that we are all guilty before God. Their diſtreſſes exiſted not in his imagination only, they were realized to his eye, his ear, his touch. As the Poet expreſſes it, when ſpeaking of him,

" He quitted bliſs that rural ſcenes beſtow,
" To ſeek a nobler amidſt ſcenes of woe,
" To traverſe ſeas, range kingdoms, and bring home
" Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
" But knowledge ſuch as only dungeons teach,
" And only ſympathy like his cou'd reach."

The number of priſons he viſited, at the hazard of his health and life, it would be difficult to collect. Nor did he ſtop at the iron-gate of the moſt gloomy dungeon. He entered thoſe dreary manſions of ſilence and darkneſs, and, in ſome inſtances, of cruel oppreſſion;

oppreſſion; poured tears of commiſeration on the wretched inhabitant; and with his own hand miniſtered aſſiſtance, while his heart was meditating plans of more general and effectual relief. "*The impreſſions*, ſays he, *which theſe* "*ſcenes of miſery made on my mind, no length of* "*time can efface.*" It may therefore eaſily be imagined that, with a ſenſibility peculiar to himſelf, he affixed that expreſſive motto to his Book,

"Ah! little think the gay———
"Whom pleaſure, power, and affluence ſurround,
"How many pine in want and dungeon-glooms;
"Shut from the common air." THOMSON.

Here I might paint, but I ſhall rather leave it to you to imagine, the extatic joy which many groaning under oppreſſion felt, at ſtarting into life and happineſs, through the interpoſition of this their generous Patron; and the gratitude too, which even thoſe who juſtly ſuffered impriſonment felt, for the alleviation of their miſeries by his kind offices.

His *Diſintereſtedneſs* alſo in theſe exertions for the good of mankind, is deſerving of our particular notice. For beſides the conſideration of the fatigues he endured, the dangers to which he expoſed his perſon, and the expence

pence of various kinds he incurred, he well knew the reports he made to the public would afford diſguſt rather than entertainment, and ſo be read and regarded by few. He writ therefore not for the amuſement of the curious, and could expect no applauſe from the unfeeling. Indeed his object was the information of Legiſlature, of whom he ſought, and from whom, to his great ſatisfaction, he obtained the redreſs of many evils he complained of. "*As nothing*, ſays he, *but a conſciouſneſs* "*of duty could have enabled me to go through* "*all the diſagreeable ſcenes which lay in my* "*way, ſo I had the happineſs of being placed* "*out of the reach of other incitements.*"

There is one more trait in his character which muſt not be overlooked, and that is his *Temperance*. Such a maſtery he obtained over himſelf that a little food, and that chiefly of the vegetable kind, ſatisfied the demands of nature; and with one night's reſt out of three he could, for a long courſe of time, purſue his journies. No conſideration could prevail on him to partake of the luxuries of the moſt elegant table, or to allow himſelf more reſt than was abſolutely neceſſary. Nor yet was he influenced, in this kind of diſcipline

he

he obſerved, by cynical auſterity. He found this mode of living moſt agreeable to his conſtitution, and beſt qualified him for thoſe active exertions which were the pleaſure of his life.

Such were the moral endowments of this extraordinary man—ſuch his *Fortitude*, his *Humanity*, his *Diſintereſtedneſs*, and *Temperance*.—I go on now to ſpeak of his religious character.

He was a firm believer of divine Revelation. Nor was he aſhamed of thoſe truths he heard ſtated, explained, and enforced in this place. He had made up his mind, as he ſaid, upon his religious ſentiments, and was not to be moved from his ſtedfaſtneſs by novel opinions obtruded on the world. Nor did he content himſelf with a bare profeſſion of theſe divine truths. He entered into the ſpirit of the goſpel, felt its power, and taſted its ſweetneſs. You know, my friends, with what ſerioufneſs and devotion he attended, for a long courſe of years, on the worſhip of God among us. It would be ſcarce decent for me to repeat the affectionate things he ſays, in a letter writ me from a remote part of the world, reſpecting the ſatisfaction and pleaſure he had felt in the religious exerciſes

of

of this place. I ſhall however be excuſed, if I juſt obſerve, that his hours of religious retirement, whether on land or at ſea, were employed in reviewing the notes he had taken of ſermons delivered here. And "*theſe*, adds "he, *are my ſongs in the houſe of my pilgrimage.* "*Oh, Sir, how many ſabbaths have I ardently* "*longed to ſpend in Wild-ſtreet!—God in Chriſt* "*is my Rock, the portion of my Soul.*"

His Candour, as might naturally be expected in a man of his exemplary piety, was great. As he ſteadily adhered to his religious principles, ſo he abhorred bigotry. Having met with difficulties in his enquiries after truth, he knew how to make allowance for thoſe who met with the ſame.

His acts of Charity to the poor were numerous. For though he was not oſtentatious, yet many of them could not be concealed. Providence bleſſed him with affluence; but all who knew him, know that nothing was more oppoſite to his diſpoſition than the heaping up wealth. His treaſure was laid up in heaven. His neighbourhood in Bedfordſhire will bear witneſs to his generoſity; and many a poor family there will, I doubt not,

feel

feel deeply for the loſs of ſo kind a Friend. Nor were his charities confined to the circle of his own manſion. "He went about," like his divine Maſter, "doing good." Compaſſion excited, prudence guided, and obligingneſs accompanied his benefactions. He well remembered what the benevolent Jeſus was uſed to ſay when on earth, "It is more bleſſed to give than to receive." Few who ſought his aſſiſtance were refuſed, and many obtained it without ſeeking it. The advancement of the intereſts of truth and religion, was an object in his view moſt important. To the erecting of many a place of worſhip did he liberally contribute. And with what chearfulneſs he aſſiſted in the building this Houſe you need not be told. "*He accounted* "*it an honour*, he ſaid, *to join his name with* "*yours.*"

Good men of every denomination he affectionately loved. And while with a manly firmneſs he aſſerted and maintained his own religious ſentiments, agreeably to the ſenſe he felt of their importance; he was a good deal hurt at every approach, in his apprehenſion, towards a little, narrow, contracted ſpirit in matters of religion. Yet he was a *Diſſenter*

from the Eſtabliſhed Church on principle. Nor was he aſhamed to have it known to all the world that this was his profeſſion. He well underſtood the grounds of his Diſſent, nor could he on any conſideration think it his duty to take the ſacramental teſt as a qualification, either for enjoying any place of honour and emolument, or ſerving any burdenſome office in the ſtate. Called upon, however, to the latter, he did not avail himſelf of this juſt excuſe for declining the ſervice; but reſolutely undertook it, at the hazard of incurring enormous pains and penalties, from which nothing but a bill of indemnity could ſecure him.

Such was the Character of this excellent man. "He went about doing good." The life of Chriſt was the original, his the copy. How nearly the latter reſembled the former you will judge from what has been ſaid. Nor am I afraid you will charge the account given of him with exaggeration. His character was a very extraordinary one. It was however, not without its imperfections: nor ſhould I do him juſtice were I to omit adding that he was himſelf deeply ſenſible of thoſe imperfections,

It remains that I mention a few hiſtorical facts, which will ſerve to throw a further light upon the character we have drawn, and confirm the truth of what hath been ſaid.

In the year 1773 he was called upon to ſerve the office of Sheriff for the county of Bedford. The priſons, of courſe, falling under his inſpection and management, he became acquainted with ſuch diſorders and abuſes, as failed not to excite his compaſſionate concern. He conſidered that priſons, houſes of correction excepted, were not meant for puniſhment but confinement. No man is in the eye of the law guilty, till legally tried and convicted. He therefore rightly concluded that to ſubject a perſon in this ſtate to any inconvenience, more than the neceſſary one of confinement, is unjuſt; and to ſuffer him, when acquitted, to be loaded with exorbitant fees, is cruel oppreſſion.

The utmoſt pains therefore he immediately took to effect a reform in the goals under his own cuſtody. This naturally led to the idea, that what had happened in his own County, might have happened alſo in other Counties. He

He therefore reſolved to viſit the priſons of neighbouring Shires. This he did, and his fears being realized by the miſerable ſcenes his eyes beheld, he extended his progreſs further, and viſited the whole kingdom. The information thus obtained, and which was committed accurately to writing, he immediately applied to the object he had in view.

In the year 1774 he was examined upon this ſubject before the Houſe of Commons, when he had the honour of their thanks. And ſoon after a Bill was brought in "for the Relief of priſoners who ſhould be acquitted —reſpecting their fees;" and another Bill "for preſerving the health of Priſoners, and preventing the Goal-diſtemper." Theſe two Acts which paſſed that Seſſion, he had printed in a different character, and ſent them to the keeper of every County-Goal in England. *By thoſe Acts*, as he obſerves, *the tear was wiped from many an eye; and the Legiſlature had for them "the bleſſings of many that were ready to periſh."* Thus had a HOWARD the honour of pouring conſolation into the afflicted breaſt; and through him it might be ſaid, "God looked down from the height of his

ſanctuary, to hear the groaning of the priſoner, to looſe thoſe that were appointed to death *."

His views, upon this ſucceſs, were quickly enlarged. He reſolved to viſit the priſons in foreign countries, not only to obtain relief for the oppreſſed, and a mitigation of miſeries to the diſtreſſed wherever he found them; but to procure ſuch new information, as might be neceſſary to forward the reforms he had in contemplation at home. His viſits were repeated, and ſcarce a kingdom was there in Europe which he did not traverſe.

He then extended his views ſtill further, and reſolved to collect the rules, orders, and drafts of the principal Lazarettos in Europe, with the medical treatment of patients in the plague; in hopes by theſe means to ſet on foot ſuch regulations, and bring forward ſuch meaſures as, with the bleſſing of God, might prevent the future return of that calamity to this country. So he travelled into Turkey, and viſited himſelf one, if not more, who was actually in that dreadful diſorder, the

* Pſ. cii. 18, 19.

diſtant

diſtant apprehenſion of which has made many a countenance turn pale.

To give you only a general account of his well-laid plans, for alleviating the miſeries of the poor, for ſtopping the progreſs of vice, for promoting induſtry and virtue, and for preventing the importation and ſpread of infectious diſeaſes, would carry me too far. I muſt therefore only add, that ſucceſs has already, in a degree, attended his endeavours. And it is to be hoped, that ſuch a ſuperſtructure will, in time, be raiſed on the foundation he has laid, as will be of the greateſt utility to this country; and which, ſhould he have acceſs to the knowledge of it in the world above, would, I am perſwaded, add to the joy his benevolent heart there feels.

We have hinted before at the painful fatigues he endured, the great expence he incurred, and the imminent dangers to which he expoſed himſelf in thus *going about to do good:* and on this ſubject I meant further to enlarge, but muſt deny myſelf this ſatisfaction, leſt I ſhould treſpaſs on your patience.

The

The attention which was paid to him by the principal Perſonages in Europe, and which he was ſo far from courting, that, in ſome inſtances, he abſolutely declined it; I ſay, this extraordinary attention of theirs, with the peculiar circumſtances that accompanied it, ſhews in what high eſtimation his character ſtood with the Public. Indeed, his modeſty muſt not be paſſed over without particular notice. His reply to one of the principal officers of ſtate in a great kingdom, upon being told that, however he would not ſuffer a ſtatue to be erected to him in his own country, a ſtatue would in the priſons of that; I ſay, his reply was memorable, and marks the character of the man. "*I have* "*no objection*, ſaid he, *to its being erected where it ſhall be inviſible.*" And in a letter he ſent me from Turkey, ſpeaking of this *haſty meaſure*, as he calls it, *and his wiſh that it might be ſtopped*, he adds, "*Alas! our beſt performances* "*have ſuch a mixture of folly and ſin, that* "*praiſe is vanity and preſumption, and pain to* "*a thinking mind.*"

He ſat out on his laſt journey the beginning of July, 1789. It was to have been of great extent, and to have taken up the com-

compaſs of about three years. I expoſtulated largely with him at parting, on the miſtake of ſuffering himſelf, through an earneſt deſire of doing good, to be precipitated beyond the clear line of duty, which might poſſibly be ſometimes the caſe. He ſeemed to apprehend he ſhould ſcarce ſee this country again, and when laſt in this place, ſaid to a friend near him, "*Well! we ſhall not perhaps meet one another again till we meet in heaven.*"

What we feared Providence has permitted. HOWARD is no more! He died at *Cherſon* *, January the 20th, of a malignant fever, which he caught by humanely viſiting a perſon in that diſorder; to whom he adminiſtered the uſual medicine, but without effect. The ſame medicine he took himſelf, which proving too powerful for his conſtitution, the fever carried him off in ten days. He had the aſſiſtance of ſeveral Phyſicians; and great attention was paid him by Prince *Potemkin*, who not only ſent him his own Phyſician, but viſited him himſelf.

* A ſettlement of the Empreſs of *Ruſſia*, toward the northern extremity of the *Euxine* or *Black Sea*, not far from *Oczakow*.

Thus

Thus fell this great and good man a ſacrifice to humanity. The ſad news has touched the hearts of thouſands. His country weeps. Who feels not on this mournful occaſion? It is no weakneſs to feel —to feel, when friendſhip and benevolence receive ſo great a ſhock from the mercileſs hand of death.

Submiſſion, however, is our duty. May ſurviving relatives patiently acquieſce in ſo very trying a providence! And let us all endeavour to compoſe our minds to this temper, by turning our attention from the loſs *we* ſuſtain to the immenſe gain *he* has acquired. "Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord: they reſt from their labours, and their works follow them *." Yes, he hath ceaſed from his labours, and is now in the perfect enjoyment of that freedom, health, and happineſs he ſo benevolently wiſhed all mankind to poſſeſs:

—— his weary ſoul he bathes
In ſeas of heavenly reſt,
And not a wave of trouble rolls
Acroſs his peaceful breaſt.

* Rev. xiv. 13.

Glory

Glory too is his reward. While the angel of mercy wiped the falling tear from his eye, God, the Judge of all, placed a crown of righteouſneſs on his head. So, with a ſatisfaction unhurt by the pain he had often felt from the applauſe of men, he received the plaudit of his divine Maſter. "Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord *." The ſentence was heard by the heavenly choir, who inſtantly, with one voice, echoed back their loud *Amen*.

* Matth. xxv. 23.

THE END.

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